

DOUBLE TROUBLE



U.S. COVID-19 cases rising again, doubling over three weeks

In this Wednesday, July 7, 2021, file photo, patrons enjoy cold tropical cocktails in the tiny interior of the Tiki-Ti bar as it reopens on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles.
Associated Press
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U.S. COVID-19 cases rising again, doubling over three weeks

From Front

By **HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and JOSH FUNK**
Associated Press

The COVID-19 curve in the U.S. is rising again after months of decline, with the number of new cases per day doubling over the past three weeks, driven by the fast-spreading delta variant, lagging vaccination rates and Fourth of July gatherings.

Confirmed infections climbed to an average of about 23,600 a day on Monday, up from 11,300 on June 23, according to Johns Hopkins University data. And all but two states — Maine and South Dakota — reported that case numbers have gone up over the past two weeks.

"It is certainly no coincidence that we are looking at exactly the time that we would expect cases to be occurring after the July Fourth weekend," said Dr. Bill Powderly, co-director of the infectious-disease division at Washington University's School of Medicine in St. Louis.

At the same time, parts of the country are running up against deep vaccine re-



In this Sunday, July 4, 2021, file photo, spectators watch as fireworks explode over the Las Vegas Strip during a 4th of July Fireworks show in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

sistance, while the highly contagious mutant version of the coronavirus that was first detected in India is accounting for an ever-larger share of infections.

Nationally, 55.6% of all Americans have received at least one COVID-19 shot, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The five states with the biggest two-week jump in cases per capita all had lower vaccination rates: Missouri, 45.9%; Arkansas, 43%; Nevada, 50.9%; Louisiana, 39.2%; and Utah, 49.5%.

Even with the latest surge, cases in the U.S. are no-

where near their peak of a quarter-million per day in January. And deaths are running at under 260 per day on average after topping out at more than 3,400 over the winter — a testament to how effectively the vaccine can prevent serious illness and death in those who happen to become infected.

Still, amid the rise, health authorities in places such as Los Angeles County and St. Louis are begging even immunized people to resume wearing masks in public. And Chicago officials announced Tuesday that unvaccinated travelers from

Missouri and Arkansas must either quarantine for 10 days or have a negative COVID-19 test.

Meanwhile, the Health Department in Mississippi, which ranks dead last nationally for vaccinations, began blocking posts about COVID-19 on its Facebook page because of a "rise of misinformation" about the virus and the vaccine.

Mississippi officials are also recommending that people 65 and older and those with chronic underlying conditions stay away from large indoor gatherings because of a 150% rise in hospitalizations over the past three weeks.

But the political will may not be there in many states fatigued by months of restrictions.

In Michigan, Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is facing a drive to repeal a law that she used to set major restrictions during the early stages of the pandemic.

And Republican Gov. Kay Ivey of Alabama pushed back against the idea that the state might need to reimpose preventive measures as vaccinations lag

and hospitalizations rise.

"Alabama is OPEN for business. Vaccines are readily available, and I encourage folks to get one. The state of emergency and health orders have expired. We are moving forward," she said on social media.

Dr. James Lawler, a leader of the Global Center for Health Security at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, said bringing back masks and limiting gatherings would help. But he acknowledged that most of the places seeing higher rates of the virus "are exactly the areas of the country that don't want to do any of these things."

Lawler warned that what is happening in Britain is a preview of what's to come in the U.S.

"The descriptions from regions of the world where the delta variant has taken hold and become the predominant virus are pictures of ICUs full of 30-year-olds. That's what the critical care doctors describe and that's what's coming to the U.S.," he said.

He added: "I think people have no clue what's about to hit us." □



In this July 8, 2021 photo, first lady Jill Biden delivers remarks before the start of the finals of the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee at Disney World in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

Associated Press

By **ALEXANDRA JAFFE and DARLENE SUPERVILLE**

Associated Press WASHINGTON (AP) — First

Jill Biden to attend Tokyo Olympics opening ceremony

First lady Jill Biden will attend the opening ceremony of the summer Olympics in Tokyo, the White House announced Tuesday, even as the city has entered a new state of emergency over a rise in coronavirus cases. Biden will attend the July 23 opening ceremony on her first solo trip abroad as first lady.

She is also expected to attend some sporting events, as well as hold of-

ficial events in Alaska and Hawaii on the way to and from Japan.

The year's Olympic competition, already postponed a year because of the pandemic, will be held without fans cheering from the stands after a state of emergency was declared in Tokyo.

A key U.S. ally, Japan has made remarkable progress in vaccinating its population against COVID-19,

but the drive has lost momentum because of supply shortages.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said last week that staff had been sent to Tokyo to assess the feasibility of Jill Biden's visit. Psaki said the president still supported U.S. athletes traveling to Tokyo for the competition despite the rise in coronavirus cases. President Biden is not attending the Games. □

U.S. says order coming this week on border asylum restrictions

By **JAKE BLEIBERG**

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP)

— The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will issue an order this week about how migrant children are treated under a public health order that has prevented people from seeking asylum at the nation's borders, a Justice Department attorney said Tuesday.

The comment by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian Stoltz at a court hearing in Fort Worth, Texas, may be the strongest indication to date that changes are imminent on the last major Trump-era restrictions on asylum at the border.

Stoltz told a federal judge that the CDC will release "a new order on the subject of the children" by the end of the week. It will revise a Biden administration policy that exempts children who cross the border alone from the ban on asylum.

Stoltz did not offer additional details on the changes during a hearing on a lawsuit that Texas brought to compel enforcement of

the public health order that former President Donald Trump's administration used to quickly expel people from the country during the coronavirus pandemic. The government attorney said the CDC order this week will largely render Texas' arguments moot. He did not elaborate, and the CDC said it could not immediately provide additional information.

His comment that the order will apply to children suggests that the Biden administration is considering a gradual lifting of the asylum ban.

Higher COVID-19 vaccination rates have brought increasing pressure on the Biden administration to lift the public health order that was always intended as a temporary measure during the pandemic. While the administration has exempted unaccompanied children, some families and nearly all adults traveling alone are expelled from the United States — often to Mexico within two hours — without a chance to seek asylum.

Lifting the ban could encourage more people to come to the border to seek asylum at a time when the U.S. is under mounting strain. The U.N. refugee agency reported last month that the U.S. was once again the top destination for asylum-seekers in 2020, with about 250,000 new claims filed, more than twice as high as second-place Germany.

Texas, which has the busiest corridor for illegal border crossings, was seeking a court order forcing the federal government to cease what state Deputy Attorney General Aaron Reitz called "de facto non-enforcement" of the asylum ban. Reitz argued that the Biden administration's posture "threatens the health



In this June 15, 2021, file photo, a Border Patrol agent watches as a group of migrants walk across the Rio Grande on their way to turning themselves in upon crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in Del Rio, Texas.

Associated Press

and safety of all Texans." U.S. District Judge Mark Pittman, a Trump appointee, questioned Stoltz about the timing of the new order and asked that the govern-

ment inform him as soon as it is issued. Pittman did not rule on the request for an injunction but said he will put out a decision "as quickly as I can." □

Appeals court: Dealers can sell handguns to 18-year-olds

By **MATTHEW BARAKAT**

Associated Press

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AP) — A federal law that for more than 50 years has banned licensed firearms dealers from selling handguns to young adults between age 18 and 21 is unconstitutional, a federal appeals court ruled Tuesday.

In a 2-1 opinion, the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond overturned a lower court ruling upholding the law.

Judge Julius Richardson, a Trump appointee, wrote that the right to bear arms is a "cherished constitutional right" that vests at age 18.

"(W)e refuse to relegate either the Second Amendment or 18- to 20-year-olds to a second-class status," Richardson wrote.

It is unclear whether the ruling would have any immediate impact. A different appeals court, the 5th Circuit, ruled in an opposite manner on the same issue several years ago.

Also, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, which is named as the defendant in the lawsuit, could seek an appeal before the full 4th Circuit panel. The three-judge panel that ruled Tuesday had a 2-1 majority of GOP-appointed judges, but the 4th Circuit as a whole has a narrow majority of Democratic-appointed judges.

The ATF referred questions to the Justice Department, which did not immediately respond Tuesday to a call and email seeking comment. □



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Audit finds folds behind New Hampshire election miscount

By **MICHAEL CASEY**
Associated Press

Auditors concluded that miscounts in a New Hampshire election were primarily caused by the way ballots were folded, according to a report released Tuesday. The audit, mandated by the legislature, was called by lawmakers from both parties after a losing Democratic candidate in a legislative race in the town of Windham requested a recount. That recount showed Republican candidates getting hundreds more votes than were originally counted.

The discrepancy drew the attention of former President Donald Trump and his supporters in their effort to find evidence of his wider claim of election fraud from 2020. Critics of the audit said before the report was finalized they felt it had not gone far enough to find the source of the miscount. "I still have a lot of questions that have to be answered. I still have questions in my mind about the folds and a couple of other items," Bruce Breton, a member of the Windham Board of



In this May 11, 2021 file photo, election auditors Mark Lindeman, left, and Harri Hursti catalog ballot boxes in Pembroke, N.H. after they arrived at the site of a forensic audit of a New Hampshire legislative election.

Associated Press

Selectmen, said. "Are the folds the real reason for the miscount?"

A team of auditors, however, "found no basis to believe that the miscounts found in Windham indicate a pattern of partisan bias or a failed election."

"Fundamentally, the large discrepancy between

election night totals and both hand counts in the State Representative contest in Windham can be attributed to unforeseen consequences and misfortune," the auditors Harri Hursti, Mark Lindeman and Philip Stark wrote. "Harried election officials borrowed a folding machine to send

out thousands of absentee ballots more quickly, and votes on roughly 400 ballots were miscounted as a result."

The town used the machine to fold the absentee ballots before sending them to voters. After they were returned, the ballots were fed into a counting ma-

chine. Because the folds on some ballots went through a Democrats name, the ballot was either not counted or a vote was wrongly given to the Democrat.

Auditors said the problem was most likely limited to Windham, a claim echoed by Secretary of State Bill Gardner. Ballots are sent to towns and cities with score marks to facilitate folding and the state ensures those marks don't go through the ovals where votes are marked.

"It is not impossible that folds affected the outcome of some contest in the 400-seat New Hampshire House of Representatives, but we can conclude that Windham was not the tip of a massive miscount iceberg," the auditors wrote. "Nonetheless, people's votes must be counted accurately, so procedural reforms are warranted."

Gardner has overseen 549 recounts in his 44 years as secretary of state, including 16 after the November elections. Those recounts involved 168,000 ballots 22% of the total cast statewide and 65 polling places. □

Chicago banker convicted in loans-for-Trump job scheme

By **LARRY NEUMEISTER**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A Manhattan jury on Tuesday convicted a Chicago banker of criminal charges for enabling Paul Manafort to get \$16 million in loans before the former campaign manager for ex-President Donald Trump helped him get an interview for a job in the Trump administration.

The jury returned its verdict in federal court after less than two hours of deliberations, convicting Stephen Calk of financial institution bribery and conspiracy. Calk's lawyers had maintained their client did nothing illegal in the weeks after Trump won the presidential election in November 2016.

But prosecutors said Calk cleared a path for

Manafort to receive loans he was not entitled to in the hopes that Calk could secure a high-level post with the Trump administration. Although Calk eventually got an interview at Trump Tower, he was not hired.

Sentencing was set for Jan.

10 for Calk, who was the former chief executive of The Federal Savings Bank. As Calk left the courthouse, he declined comment. His lawyer, Paul Schoeman, later issued a statement, saying: "We are very disappointed by the verdict and will be pursuing all

available legal remedies, including an appeal."

In a release, U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss said Calk had used his federally insured bank to try to buy himself "prestige and power."

During the three-week trial, prosecutors gave jurors proof that Calk played a pivotal role in getting approval for a \$9.5 million real estate construction loan and another \$6.5 million so Manafort could finish construction on a Brooklyn condominium and avoid foreclosure.

Defense lawyers argued that Calk could not win approval for the loans without the bank's loan committee and underwriters agreeing to the terms. And they noted that the loans were obtained at a time when Manafort was

considered wealthy and successful and had not yet been criminally charged.

Early in the trial, Anthony Scaramucci testified that he never would have enabled Calk to get the interview for the administration post if he had known that Calk was helping Manafort to get millions of dollars in loans for his real estate ventures.

Scaramucci had testified that Manafort, who served as Trump's campaign manager for a key stretch from June to early August 2016, reached out to him in mid-to-late December 2016 to encourage him to consider Calk for an important position.

At the time, Scaramucci was working on Trump's presidential transition team. □



In this May 23, 2019, file photo, Chicago banker Stephen Calk, center, leaves Federal court, in New York with his attorney Jeremy Margolis, left.

Associated Press

U.N.: world hunger was dramatically worse in pandemic year

By FRANCES D'EMILIO and
EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The United Nations on Monday lamented a “dramatic worsening” of world hunger last year, saying much of that is likely connected to the pandemic, and it urged billions of dollars to save millions of people from starving.

A report issued jointly by five U.N. agencies said hunger outpaced population growth in 2020, with nearly 10% of all people estimated to be undernourished.

It said the sharpest rise in hunger came in Africa, where 21% of the people 282 million are estimated to be undernourished.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the new “tragic data” shows that between 720 million and 811 million people in the world faced hunger last year as many as 161 million more than in 2019.

More than 2.3 billion people, which represents 30% of the global population, lacked year-round access to adequate food, according to the report. This indicator, known as the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity, leaped in one year as



Residents of Oworonshoki Slum carry their food parcels distributed by the Lagos Food Bank Initiative, a non-profit nutrition focused initiative committed to fighting hunger and solving problems of Malnutrition for poor communities, in Lagos, Nigeria, Saturday, July 10, 2021.

Associated Press

much as in the five previous years combined.

“Despite a 300% increase in global food production since the mid-1960s, malnutrition is a leading factor contributing to reduced life expectancy,” the U.N. chief said. “In a world of plenty, we have no excuse for billions of people to lack access to a healthy diet. This is unacceptable.”

Emily Farr of the humanitarian organization Oxfam

said the pandemic was the last straw for millions of people already battered by the impacts of conflict, economic shocks and a worsening climate crisis.

Children paid a high price, with 149 million of those younger than 5 estimated to have stunted growth since they are too short for their age, and more than 45 million children are too thin for their height, the report said. It also noted the

paradoxical problem of nearly 39 million children being overweight.

“A full 3 billion adults and children remain locked out of healthy diets, largely due to excessive costs,” the U.N. agencies said, and COVID-19 made things worse. “In many parts of the world, the pandemic has triggered brutal recessions and jeopardized access to food,” the United Nations said in a summary of

its findings. “Yet even before the pandemic, hunger was spreading; progress on malnutrition lagged.”

“Disturbingly, in 2020 hunger shot up in both absolute and proportional terms, outpacing population growth,” the report’s authors concluded. The report said some 9.9% of the world’s people were estimated to have been undernourished last year, compared to 8.4% in 2019. Geographically, in addition to the surge of Africans facing hunger, more than half the undernourished people 418 million live in Asia, while 60 million live in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the report.

Oxfam’s Farr said the new figures “are a somber reminder of how broken our global food and economic systems are.”

“More than half the world’s population did not have social protection to cope with the adverse effects of the pandemic,” she said. “Small farmers were forced to watch their crops rot during the pandemic, even when global food prices rose by 40%, while the biggest food companies have amassed over \$10 billion of additional revenues last year.” □

China tightens control over cybersecurity in data crackdown

By JOE McDONALD
AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Tech experts in China who find a weakness in computer se-

curity would be required to tell the government and couldn’t sell that knowledge under rules further tightening the Communist

Party’s control over information.

The rules would ban private sector experts who find “zero day,” or previously unknown security weaknesses, and sell the information to police, spy agencies or companies. Such vulnerabilities have been a feature of major hacking attacks including one this month blamed on a Russian-linked group that infected thousands of companies in at least 17 countries.

Beijing is increasingly sensitive about control over information about its people and economy. Companies are barred from storing data about Chinese customers outside China.

Companies including ride-hailing service Didi Global Inc., which recently made its U.S. stock market debut, have been publicly warned to tighten data security.

Under the new rules, anyone in China who finds a vulnerability must tell the government, which will decide what repairs to make. No information can be given to “overseas organizations or individuals” other than the product’s manufacturer.

No one may “collect, sell or publish information on network product security vulnerabilities,” say the rules issued by the Cyberspace Administration of China and the police and

industry ministries. They take effect Sept. 1.

The ruling party’s military wing, the People’s Liberation Army, is a leader along with the United States and Russia in cyber warfare technology. PLA officers have been charged by U.S. prosecutors with hacking American companies to steal technology and trade secrets.

Consultants that find “zero day” weaknesses say their work is legitimate because they serve police or intelligence agencies. Some have been accused of aiding governments accused of human rights abuses or groups that spy on activists. □



In this Sept. 12, 2017, file photo, attendees walk past an electronic display showing recent cyberattacks in China at the China Internet Security Conference in Beijing.

Associated Press

Russia against U.S. troops in Central Asia near Afghanistan

By **VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV**
Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia has strongly warned the United States against deploying its troops in the former Soviet Central Asian nations following their withdrawal from Afghanistan, a senior diplomat said in remarks published on Tuesday.

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said that Moscow conveyed the message to Washington during Russian President Vladimir Putin's summit with U.S. President Joe Biden in Geneva last month.

The warning comes as the U.S. military said last week that 90% of the withdrawal of U.S. troops and equipment from Afghanistan is complete. Biden said the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan will conclude on Aug. 31.

"I would emphasize that the redeployment of the American permanent military presence to the countries neighboring Afghanistan is unacceptable," Ryabkov said. "We told the Americans in a direct and



In this photo released by the Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and Sudanese Foreign Minister Maryam al-Sadiq al-Mahdi arrive to attend talks in Moscow, Russia, Monday, July 12, 2021.

straightforward way that it would change a lot of things not only in our perceptions of what's going on in that important region, but also in our relations with the United States."

He added that Russia has also issued the warning to Central Asian nations.

"We cautioned them

against such steps, and we also have had a frank talk on the subject with our Central Asian allies, neighbors and friends and also other countries in the region that would be directly affected," Ryabkov said in an interview published in the Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn magazine.

On Monday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov emphasized that Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are all members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and any presence of foreign troops on their territories must be endorsed by the security pact. He added that none

of those countries have raised the issue.

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan both host Russian military bases. Kyrgyzstan, which hosted a U.S. military base that supported operations in Afghanistan, closed it in 2014.

Uzbekistan, which also hosted a U.S. base, ordered it shut in 2005 amid tensions with Washington. Uzbekistan's Defense Ministry reaffirmed in May that the country's constitution and its military doctrine rule out the presence of any foreign troops on its territory.

"I don't think that the emergence of new American military facilities in Central Asia would promote security in the region," Lavrov said.

The Biden administration has reportedly considered Uzbekistan and Tajikistan that border Afghanistan, as well as Kazakhstan, as possible staging areas for monitoring and quickly responding to possible security problems that may follow the U.S. military's withdrawal from Afghanistan.

□

Associated Press

Dutch COVID-19 infections soar by 500% in a week

By **MIKE CORDER**
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Coronavirus infections in the Netherlands skyrocketed by more than 500% over the last week, the country's public health institute reported Tuesday. The surge follows the scrapping of almost all remaining lockdown restrictions and the reopening of night clubs in late June.

The weekly update showing that nearly 52,000 people in the Netherlands tested positive for COVID-19 over the past week came a day after caretaker Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte apologized for the June 26 lockdown relaxation and called it "an error of judgment."

Rutte backtracked Friday

and reintroduced some restrictions in an attempt to rein in the soaring infection rate. Bars again have to close at midnight, while discotheques and clubs were shuttered again until at least Aug. 13.

The Netherlands, along with other European nations, is facing a rise in infections fueled by the more contagious delta variant just as governments hoped to greatly ease or eliminate remaining pandemic restrictions during the summer holiday season.

With infections rising around France, President Emmanuel Macron on Monday cranked up pressure on people to get vaccinated and said special COVID passes would be required to go into restau-

rants and shopping malls starting next month.

The Dutch public health institute said that of the infections that could be traced to their source, 37% happened in a hospitality venue such as a bar or club. Infections among people ages 18-24 surged by 262%, followed by a 191% rise in 25-29 year-olds. Despite the alarming rise in confirmed cases, hospital admissions increased by a modest 11%, or 60 COVID-19 patients, over the week, the institute said. Twelve of the admissions were to intensive care units.

More than 46% of the Netherlands' adult population is fully vaccinated, and more than 77% of the country's adults have had at least



Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte arrives for an EU summit at the European Council building in Brussels, Thursday, June 24, 2021.

Associated Press

one shot. Health authorities said more than 1.3 million people would receive their first or second doses this week.

Health Minister Hugo de Jonge said Monday that the late June loosening of restrictions combined with a lack of social distancing and the delta variant "has

had, of course, an accelerating effect. You can unfortunately see that with hindsight."

Other countries in Europe are scrambling to accelerate coronavirus vaccinations in the hope of outpacing the spread of the more infectious delta variant. □

U.S. eases crippling Venezuela sanction, allows propane deals

By REGINA GARCIA CANO
and JORGE RUEDA

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— The U.S. government on Monday moved to ease a crippling sanction imposed by the Trump administration on Venezuela by allowing companies to export propane to the troubled South American country, a step that could mitigate a shortage that has pushed people to cook on charcoal or wood grills.

The Biden administration's policy decision of wide impact in Venezuela comes as the socialist government of President Nicolas Maduro has begun to allow foreign aid into the country and taken other steps to signal it is willing to engage with Washington.

The license from the U.S. Department of the Treasury authorizes non-U.S. companies to export liquefied petroleum gas to Venezuela without risking sanctions. The authorization is valid for one year.

"It is obviously a humanitarian gesture to the Venezu-



Opposition leader Juan Guaidó and his wife Fabiana Rosales walk at their residential building after holding an impromptu press conference in Caracas, Venezuela, Monday, July 12, 2021.

Associated Press

elan government because in the country with the largest oil reserves in the world, people are cooking with wood on wood stoves instead of with propane," said Russ Dallen, managing partner at Caracas Capital Markets.

But the U.S. move was announced on the same day that opposition leaders claimed to have been the targets of Maduro's security forces. "The timing could not have been worse" for Washington, Dallen said. Maduro's opposition in a

statement accused armed security forces of seeking to detain leader Juan Guaidó. The bloc said security forces also arbitrarily detained a former congressman.

Guaidó told reporters from the basement of his

residence in Caracas that members of the Venezuelan security forces intercepted his vehicle and threatened to arrest him. He said the agents "pointed long weapons" at the vehicle and ordered him to open the doors, but then withdrew amid protests from neighbors.

"The intimidation has never stopped us," said Guaidó, who is considered by the U.S. and dozens of other nations to be Venezuela's legitimate leader and has previously negotiated humanitarian aid.

Venezuela's government did not respond to requests for comments on the sanctions.

The Treasury Department has previously relaxed other measures, including granting licenses for six teams of the Venezuelan Baseball League so that MLB players could participate in the local tournament and issuing other licenses that allow the Central Bank of Venezuela to carry out certain transactions related to the coronavirus pandemic. □

Guatemalan president threatens to crack down on protests

GUATEMALA CITY

The president of Guatemala vowed Monday to crack down on demonstrators complaining of mismanagement of the coronavirus pandemic

and protesting delays in shipments of Russia's Sputnik vaccine. A crowd of about 300 protesters gathered Saturday in the main square of the capital to demand the resignation of

President Alejandro Giammattei for his failure to obtain enough vaccine.

On Monday, banners appeared on several streets in Guatemala City demanding Giammattei resign.

Referring to the protests, Giammattei said: "We are going to limit this type of thing. I think this is enough already."

"These people are spreading the virus and causing more problems, that is what they want and they are spreading it through a series of illegal demonstrations," he added.

Giammattei signed a deal for 16 million doses of the two-dose Russian vaccine, and paid 50%, or almost \$80 million, up front. But only about 550,000 Sputnik doses have arrived so far. □



Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei speaks at a new facility to receive deported Guatemalans at La Aurora Air Force base during its inauguration ceremony also attended by U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas in Guatemala City, Wednesday, July 7, 2021.

Associated Press



infini
by Urvin Croes

Taste limitless possibilities at Infini, where Chef Urvin Croes and his team explores without boundaries and steps with both feet outside of the box to create his most sensational dishes yet. This meticulously designed restaurant located inside Blue Residences on scenic Eagle Beach is a chef's table concept with limited seating where diners are able to interact with the staff and other guests alike throughout the evening.

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NOORD — “My goal was to do real estate in a different way when I established this company June 1st 2009. Not from the perspective of only selling, but to look for the perfect match between dream house and client. My philosophy is: it will only work when all involved are happy and connected by that personal touch,” says Randolph Arends, owner of Aruba Living Today. Together with his business partner Berend Prenger and a dedicated team they practice what they preach: mediation in Real Estate with a high service level. “I am proud to state that so far all of my clients stayed with us. I am not selling a fairytale, in ten years of course there were challenges too but it is about how you handle those. It's like with family, you stick together with ups and downs. But the love is there.”

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Testimonials

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“Randolph and his team helped us immensely to find our dream home on Aruba. Their service is excellent, before and after buying the house. His office also helped us with financing the property. Finding the perfect home is the goal, but what I found just as important during the whole process is Randolph's integrity. He really looks at what you need, doesn't make false claims and also advises you correctly when it is not in his own interest. This makes you feel valued and in good hands.”

vanmullem1

“Without any doubt the best real estate agent on the island! Randolph helped out buying our property on the island, representing us as a buyer. The guy knows the island and most people in Aruba what is a great help. His after sales goes way beyond expected and included services like helping getting connected to water, electricity and gas. If needed he can help you find renters for your house and managing it, again with the same service and transparency. Summarizing, the guy and his company are our eyes and ears on the island if we are not there.”

Debora Zywaszko

“My husband and I have been coming to Aruba for 30 years and have dreamed about owning our own home in Aruba. I was referred to Randolph from Aruba Living Today. I am a Realtor myself in the US for 38 years, so finding the right Realtor was the key. Randolph and his team has made this process a piece of cake. His integrity and honesty has made him a success, always available when we called or wanted to meet. Not only is he our Realtor, but a new lifelong friend!!! Be sure to call him.”

Frank Stolp

“Aruba Living Today is probably the best real estate agent on the island. Randolph and his team arranged long term rental houses



for us, communication with them is always correct and they respond quickly. Absolutely recommend Aruba Living Today!”

Linda Kandel

“THE BEST! No other way to describe the way I was treated at this company. ABOVE AND BEYOND any expected services. 5 star all the way! Don't hesitate.”

The door is open

Aruba Living Today houses in an authentic Aruban house, welcoming you in a warm ambiance that emphasizes the philosophy of connecting. Candles, Buddha ornaments, magazines and a homey setting form the décor for you to sit and talk about your dream house or investment. Aruba Living Today caters for both local and foreign market divided into 40 % local buyers and 60 % foreign buyers. “Our customers come from Holland, Belgium, Norway, Germany, UK, Russia, Latin America, United States and Canada. We are widely covered and thus provable good with different cultures, also we speak four languages.” Besides that Aruba Living Today is open to every budget, they have listings for all category buyers. As a member of the Aruban Real Estate Association they are listed also on the website www.arubalisting.com within a group of 20 of the most advanced realtors on the island. Aruba Living Today is featured as well on television and you can find them on House Hunters, Social Media - Aruba Living Today and of course in Aruba Today's newspaper.

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The most revisited Caribbean Island

By Meghan Jones

NEW YORK — As the weather gets colder and winter approaches fast, you've likely found yourself daydreaming about beautiful beaches, sunny skies, and 80-degree temperatures. You might even be battling seasonal affective disorder. If you're seriously considering a tropical getaway, especially around the holidays, you'll have some planning to do.

Firstly, and most importantly, where will you go? There are thousands of islands in the Caribbean alone. It's impossible to know which one is the best, right? Well, as a matter of fact, one island does rise above the others in terms of visitor satisfaction: Aruba. Over half of travelers to Aruba return at least once in their lives, with some returning annually. Thankfully it's not one of the 16 places that have been ruined by tourism.

For one thing, Aruba is a relatively small island—only 19-and-a-half miles long and six miles wide—and taxis, public transportation, and car rentals are easily accessible. It's also outside of the hurricane zone, so you'll be safe from the elements. Like most Caribbean islands, the weather is great and the water is beautiful (both in color and in temperature; the ocean waters remain around 80 degrees nearly all year round). Aruba's outdoor temperatures usu-



Picture credit: Steve Photography/Shutterstock
Sources: metro.us, sharetravelnews.blogspot.com,
blog.cooladventures.com

ally hover around 80 degrees—more than hot enough to entice you to take a dip in the water, but not humid enough to be uncomfortable. Its strong offshore winds also make it a great spot for water sports. Plus, it's one of the 12 best off-season travel deals you can book now.

If you like the bustling resort experience, check out the beautiful Palm Beach and its surrounding resort hotels. If you prefer a quieter, less crowded beach experience, the nearby Eagle Beach is probably the spot for you. And there's more than just beaches, of course: the island

is full of excellent restaurants, shops, street vendors, and nightlife. U.S. dollars are widely accepted at stores and restaurants. On the less developed side of the island, there are plenty of great spots for hiking and sightseeing as well. Finally, the atmosphere of the whole island is one of happiness and kindness. Unlike some of the other Caribbean islands, Aruba is pretty safe for travelers beyond the confines of resorts. Though Dutch is the official language since Aruba is a Dutch territory, most of its residents also speak English (as well as Spanish and the local language, Papiamentu). The friendly, welcoming attitude of the locals, who hail from all over the world, has earned Aruba the nickname "One Happy Island." And that one happy island has created lots and lots of happy tourists. So if you take a trip to Aruba, odds are—literally—that you'll leave wanting to come back.

About the author

Meghan Jones is a Staff Writer for RD.com who has been writing since before she could write. She graduated from Marist College with a Bachelor of Arts in English and has been writing for Reader's Digest since 2017. In spring 2017, her creative nonfiction piece "Anticipation" was published in Angles literary magazine. □

Chuck and Patricia Jones honored at Distinguished Visitors

EAGLE BEACH — Recently, Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure to honor a loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba as Distinguished Visitors at their home away from home. The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between 10-20-35 and more consecutive years.

The honorees were **Chuck & Patricia Jones**, who are residents of Middleborough Massachusetts. They have been coming to their home away from home for many years. They love the perfect weather, the Aruban people and the great and delicious food available island wide.

Heyliger together with representatives of Manchebo Beach Resort handed over some gift to the honorees and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their vacation destination and as their home away from home for so many years. □





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SETAR

AHATA: Hotel occupancy reached 70% in June

ORANJESTAD —The Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association has released the most recent hotel performance results, which show that hotel occupancy continues to recover.

JUNE 2021:

- **Occupancy:** The occupancy rate was 69.5%, which is 16% lower than in June of 2019.
- **ADR:** The average daily rate (for occupied rooms) was \$246.05, which is an increase of 8% compared to 2019.
- **RevPAR:** The revenue per available room achieved was \$171.06; a 9% decrease from 2019.

FIRST HALF OF 2021:

In the first 6 months of the year, Aruba's hotels experienced an average occupancy of 45%. ADR was 15% lower than in 2019, and RevPAR reduced by 55%.

OCCUPANCY FORECAST:

	Occupancy	Occ level compared to 2019
July	76%	86%
August	70%	81%
September	63%	79%
October	70%	92%
2021	57%	67%

TIMESHARE

AHATA's Timeshare properties experienced 81% occupancy in June, and an average occupancy of 87% is projected for July 2021.

AHATA member hotels: Amsterdam Manor Beach Resort, Barceló Aruba, Boardwalk Boutique Hotel, Brickell Bay Beach Club, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, Courtyard by Marriott, Divi & Tamarijn All-Inclusive, Eagle Aruba Re-

sort, Holiday Inn Resort Aruba, Hyatt Regency Aruba, Hyatt Place Aruba Airport, Manchebo Beach Resort, Marriott Aruba & Stellaris Casino, Paradera Park, Radisson Blu Aruba, Renaissance Aruba Resort, The Ritz-Carlton Aruba, RIU Palace Aruba, RIU Palace Antillas, Talk of the Town Hotel.

AHATA member timeshares: Divi Aruba Phoenix, Divi Dutch Village, Divi Village Golf, La Cabana, Marriott Ocean Club, Marriott Surf Club. □



Watch 'Ask Pilar': our videos show you the other Aruba



ORANJESTAD — Aruba Today offers a series of videos 'Ask Pilar' on their Facebook page Aruba Today and on the website www.arubatoday.com. Since the start, October 2019, more than 20 videos have been created. Let us introduce to you this project and present the people behind it.

Why a video? Besides offering our free daily newspaper, posts on Facebook and Instagram and our

website content, we started evaluating the plans for short video's about a year ago. The concept was created by Editor-in-Chief Linda Reijnders to add variety to the product Aruba Today. "There is more to this island than palm trees and beaches and in our videos we wish to inform and educate the visitor by showing local places and characters of any kind. We are all new to this, the goal is not to deliver a technical perfect

result, more to motivate our visitors with the places we visit as well as transmitting the good energy coming from it." As the title of the video 'Ask Pilar' already shows, the viewer has the opportunity to actually ask about the topics shown, or even suggest a location for a video. Just ask our host Pilar on Facebook and we will let you know.

The team

Pilar Flores, 35- years- old, is

the jolly host of 'Ask Pilar'. She loves doing the videos because she gets to know many interesting places and meet a lot of nice people. "I hope with it that people will get to know and love Aruba the way us locals do."

The one capturing the images with his camera and editing them is our videographer Juan Luis Pinto Sotter, Marketing Major at the University of Aruba. "I chose marketing because I wanted a career that kept me physically and mentally active. As a marketer there is a lot of moving around, I can't begin to imagine what the real world will be like."

Video Director of 'Ask Pilar' is Linda Reijnders, Sales of Aruba Today. "I love working in the media, I love to

write, create, connect, inform and educate. Working with young, talented and motivated people like Juan Luis and Pilar is a blessing to me. We really enjoy making these Aruba Peeks and we surely hope that rubs off on the viewer."

Corona Street Talk

During the pandemic a new series of videos was launched, dedicated to the COVID-19 crisis where we show people in their daily life during the corona time. Take a look on the website and social media for this new series called Corona Street Talk.

Check us out on Facebook Aruba Today or the website www.arubatoday.com and do not forget to like and share! Thank you for your support. □

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Who gets the keys to your digital estate?

By **LIZ WESTON**
of NerdWallet

You may not own cryptocurrency or nonfungible tokens. You may not have a big Instagram following or run an online business. But if you do almost anything online, you probably have digital assets: electronic records that you own, control or license. Failing to make arrangements for those assets while you're alive could cause unnecessary costs, stress and heartache to those you leave behind. Online photo and video collections could be lost forever. Heirs could also be locked out of electronic records with monetary value, such as cryptocurrency and frequent flyer miles. Email and social media accounts could be hacked. Even basic tasks, such as paying bills online or canceling online subscriptions, may be difficult or impossible if you haven't made arrangements.

"There would be no way for someone to know how I pay bills unless they could access my online account and my emails," says Abby Schneiderman, co-founder of Everplans, a site for creating end-of-life plans and storing documents. "And if it takes you a while to access these accounts, you're going to realize afterwards, 'Well, we've lost thousands of dollars on services we don't use or don't

need anymore, because we can't access them.'"

Here's what you should consider and do to make this job easier for the person who winds up doing it.

THE ONLINE LIFE DOESN'T LEAVE A PAPER TRAIL

In the past, your executor the person entrusted with settling your estate after your death probably could have figured out what you owned and owed by rummaging through the papers in your filing cabinet and the bills in your mail, notes Sharon Hartung, the author of two books for financial advisors, "Your Digital Undertaker" and "Digital Executor." That's no longer the case.

"Because our digital assets tend to be virtual in nature, an executor is not going to find them in a search of our home office," Hartung says. "We're going to have to leave some additional instructions on what we've created and how the executor is supposed to get access."

Google and Facebook are among the few online providers that allow you to appoint someone to manage your accounts if you become incapacitated or die.

Apple recently announced plans to add a similar feature. The vast majority of online providers don't have this option, however. Complicating matters further,

almost all providers prohibit sharing passwords, Hartung says.

Typically, executors can't demand access to your digital assets unless you specifically give them authority to do so in your will or living trust. Even then, a provider's terms of service may limit what the executor can do and hinder them from carrying out your wishes.

So giving your executor your login credentials may be the easiest way to make sure they can carry out your wishes, estate planning experts say.

MAKE A DIGITAL ASSETS INVENTORY

The first step in creating a plan for your digital assets is to make a list of them. Searching for a "digital assets inventory" will turn up some worksheets, including a detailed one created by the trade organization Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners, or STEP, that allows you to list your accounts, usernames and, if desired, your passwords.

Don't forget to include access to your devices. If you have two-factor authentication set up on accounts to verify your identity and typically you should your executor will need the passcode to unlock your phone or other device that receives the authentication code.

You may also want to leave a letter of instruction telling



This undated file photo provided by NerdWallet shows Liz Weston, a columnist for the personal finance website. (NerdWallet via Associated Press)

your executor about your wishes for various assets: what to delete, what to archive and what to transfer to heirs, for example.

Another option is to keep your login credentials in a password manager such as LastPass or 1Password. These tools typically have a "notes" field that would allow you to include details about how you'd like the account to be handled. You would need to provide your executor with the master password, which could be included in the letter of instruction.

KEEP YOUR INVENTORY

SAFE AND UPDATED

You don't want to include sensitive information such as passwords in your will, since that document becomes public after you die. Instead, store the inventory and letter of instruction with your other estate planning documents in a secure location, such as with your attorney or in a home safe, and let your executor know where to find it. You also could upload the information to an online storage site, such as Everplans or LifeSite, that allows you to give a trusted person access to the documents. □

U.S. deficit for current budget year climbs to \$2.24 trillion

By **MARTIN CRUTSINGER**
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government's deficit for the first nine months of this budget year hit \$2.24 trillion, keeping the country on track for its second biggest shortfall in history. In its monthly budget report, the Treasury Department said Tuesday that the deficit for the budget year that ends in September is running 9.1% below last year's pace. The deficit for the full 2020 fiscal year was a record \$3.1 trillion.

The Congressional Budget Office is projecting that this year's deficit will total a slightly smaller \$3



This May 4, 2021, photo shows the Treasury Building in Washington. Associated Press

trillion. The deficits in both years were bloated by the multitrillion-dollar spending packages the government has passed to combat the economic downturns caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the previous deficit record was \$1.4 trillion, set in 2009 when the government was seeking to offset a steep economic downturn triggered by the 2008 financial crisis.

So far this fiscal year, government receipts have totaled \$3.06 trillion, up 35.2%

from the same period a year ago. The number for last year was pushed downward by the fact that various tax deadlines were delayed, so revenue collections were lower because payments came in after June.

Spending in the October-June period totaled \$5.29 trillion, up 5.8% from the same period last year.

For the month of June, the deficit totaled \$174.2 billion, 79.8% lower than the June 2020 deficit of \$864.1 billion, which was record high for any month. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 39 Static

1 Will problem names

6 Recipe 41 Coop instruction group

10 Follow 42 Melville

11 Speculate book

12 Stood up

13 Tennis

star

Rafael

14 Past due

15 Canada's capital

16 Sense of self

17 Scrooge cry

18 Superman foe Luthor

19 Delivered the news

22 Sub shop

23 Editor's spot

26 Sent home, in a way

29 Track act

32 In shape

33 Retina setting

34 Other-worldly

36 Singer k.d.

37 Ford's predecessor

38 Comic's forte

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E N S E G G I R A
C O F F E E M A K E R
T R O I S A G E N T
S E R G E N O S E S

Yesterday's answer

DOWN

1 Physician

2 Furious

3 Uranium-

235, for

one

4 Trick

5 Spot

6 Petty fight

7 Kind of

pool

8 Really

impressed

9 Take it

easy

11 Precisely

15 Granola

bit

17 Press

event

20 Outmoded

away

21 German

article

24 Fill with

mist

25 Convention

Linus

highlight

27 Snap

28 College

award

29 Judge's

place

30 Send

31 Poison

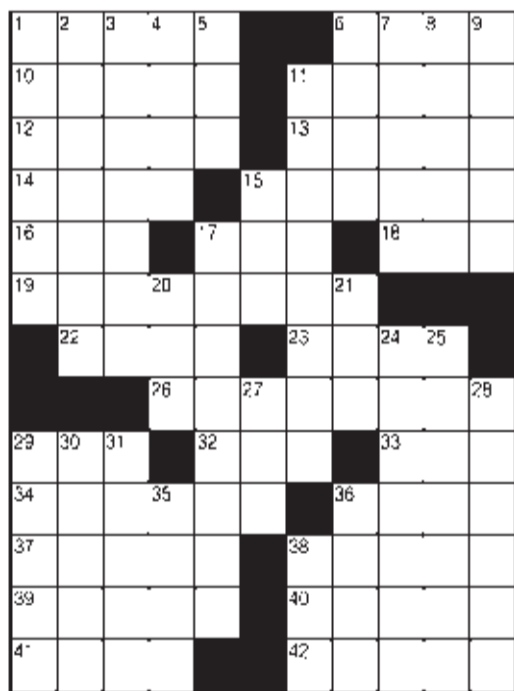
35 Great

weights

36 Sister of

38 Pillbox,

e.g.



7-14

A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-14

CRYPTOQUOTE

Q T W Z M C R W O X W F X W Z Z M C

M I O N U B Y M O Q H C W B Q T W

R O W V Q W O U B Q T W U O A M X W O

Q M T V O N H B S M Z Q V U O W

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: HALF THE FUN OF THE TRAVEL IS THE ESTHETIC OF LOSTNESS. — RAY BRADBURY



Anti-government protesters march in Havana, Cuba, Sunday, July 11, 2021.

Associated Press

Cuba's internet cutoff: A go-to tactic to suppress dissent

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, FRANK BAJAK and TALI ARBEL

AP Technology Writers

Cubans facing the country's worst economic crisis in decades took to the streets over the weekend. In turn, authorities blocked social media sites in an apparent effort to stop the flow of information into, out of and within the beleaguered nation. Restricting internet access has become a tried-and-true method of stifling dissent by authoritarian regimes around the world, alongside government-supported disinformation campaigns and propaganda. On the extreme side, regimes like China and North Korea exert tight control over what regular citizens can access online. Elsewhere, service blockages are more limited, often cutting off common social platforms around elections and times of mass protests. There was no formal organizer of Sunday's protests; people found out about the rallying points over social media, mostly on Twitter and Facebook, the platforms most used by Cubans. The thousands of Cubans who took to the streets — protesters and pro-government activists alike — wielded smartphones to capture images and send them to relatives and friends or post them online. On Monday, Cuban authorities were blocking Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Telegram, said Alp Toker, director of Netblocks, a London-based internet monitoring firm. "This does seem to be a response to social media-fueled protest," he said. Twitter did not appear to be blocked, though Toker noted Cuba could cut it off if it wants to. While the recent easing of access by Cuban authorities to the internet has increased social media activity, Toker said, the level of censorship has also risen. Not only does the cutoff block out external voices, he said, it also squelches "the internal voice of the population who have wanted to speak out."

Internet access in Cuba has been expensive and relatively rare until recently. The country was "basically offline" until 2008, then gradually entered a digital revolution, said Ted Henken, a Latin America expert at Baruch College, City University of New York. The biggest change, he noted, came in December 2018 when Cubans got access to mobile internet for the first time via data plans purchased from the state telecom monopoly. These days, more than half of all Cubans have internet access, Henken said.

Many Cubans now have real-time, anywhere-you-are access to the internet and the ability to share information among themselves, he added. Since early 2019, this access has facilitated regular, if smaller, events and protests on the island. In response, the government has periodically shut down access to social media, mostly to hide its repressive tactics from both citizens and foreigners, he said.

The Cuban government also restricts independent media in Cuba and "routinely blocks access within Cuba to many news websites and blogs," according to Human Rights Watch. Cuba is going through its worst economic crisis in decades, along with a resurgence of coronavirus cases, as it suffers the consequences of U.S. sanctions imposed by the Trump administration. The protests now, the largest in decades, are "absolutely and definitely fueled by increased access to internet and smartphones in Cuba," said Sebastian Arcos, associate director of the Cuban Research Institute at Florida International University. Social media posts from within and outside of Cuba are "not the root causes of the rebellion, but they are a factor in connecting the desperation, disaffection that exists in the island," said Arturo López-Levy, an assistant political science professor at Holy Names University in California. □

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'The Crown,' 'Mandalorian' top Emmy nominations with 24 each

By LYNN ELBER

AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "The Crown" tied with "The Mandalorian" for the most Emmy nominations Tuesday with 24 apiece, but the Marvel universe also got bragging rights with runner-up "WandaVision."

The nominations reinforced the rapid rise of streaming, with most of the top-nominated scripted shows on services that emerged in the past two years. In the top three categories — drama, comedy and limited series — broadcast networks scored only two nominations, for the NBC drama "This Is Us" and the ABC comedy "black-ish."

During an oppressive pandemic in which housebound Americans relied more than ever on television for distraction, TV academy voters recognized a varied mix of storytelling and a diverse group of actors and creators.

One example: Mj Rodriguez of "Pose" is the first trans woman to be nominated in a lead acting category. The show also earned a best drama series nod.

Netflix's "The Crown" received its fourth nomination for best series, and is likely the streaming service's best chance to win its first-ever top series trophy. The British royal drama moved



This image released by Disney+ shows Pedro Pascal in a scene from "The Mandalorian."

Associated Press

closer to contemporary events with its version of the courtship and rocky marriage of Prince Charles and Diana Spencer, played by Josh O'Connor and Emma Corrin. O'Connor and Corrin received lead drama acting nods, as did the series' Olivia Colman for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II, with a supporting bid to Gillian Anderson for her performance as Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The showings by "The Mandalorian," an extension of the "Star Wars" franchise, and the inventive "WandaVision" featuring the Marvel characters Wanda and Vision, put the series in the ranks of past sci-fi and fantasy Emmy favorites

"Game of Thrones" and "Lost."

"I would never have thought in a million years that playing a witch in a Marvel show would lead to this. It's like a dream," said "WandaVision" co-star Kathryn Hahn. The show's total of 23 nominations was especially sweet.

"I'm so moved that the whole of it has been recognized," Hahn said. "It was incredibly difficult. It was a hard, hard shoot. But ... the experience of making this meant so much to me and it was so unexpectedly deep." The frontrunner on the comedy side is the good-hearted "Ted Lasso," about a middling American football coach imported to

England to handle a soccer team. The Apple TV+ series received 20 nominations, including for top comedy, star Jason Sudeikis and six cast members.

"Hacks," starring Jean Smart as a stand-up comedian who resists getting aged out of Las Vegas and life, was next with 15 nods, including a lead actor award for Smart and a supporting bid for Hannah Einbinder.

Smart, who some have said is enjoying a career "Jeannaisance," earned a second nomination for her supporting role in "Mare of Easttown." The limited series received 16 nods, including for star Kate Winslet.

Among the other who dou-

bled down on nominations: "Saturday Night Live" stars Kenan Thompson and Aidy Bryant, who received supporting acting bids for the variety show as well as lead comedy series acting nods for, respectively, "Kenan" and "Shrill."

There were surprises, as usual. Nicole Kidman failed to receive a nomination for limited series "The Undoing," while co-star Hugh Grant was recognized. But the critically acclaimed miniseries "I May Destroy You" and its star and creator, Michaela Coel, grabbed nine Emmy nods after being snubbed by the Golden Globes.

One blast from the past getting new respect: "Cobra Kai," set 30 years after the events of the "Karate Kid" film, earned a best comedy nod and four nominations in all.

The other nominees for best drama series are: "The Boys"; "Bridgerton"; "The Handmaid's Tale" and "Lovecraft Country."

The other nominees for best comedy series are: "Emily in Paris"; "The Flight Attendant"; "The Kominsky Method" and "PEN15."

The nominees for best miniseries are: "The Queen's Gambit"; "I May Destroy You"; "Mare of Easttown"; "The Underground Railroad"; "WandaVision." □

Not nice: Baron Cohen sues Massachusetts cannabis dispensary

BOSTON (AP) — Actor Sacha Baron Cohen has sued a Massachusetts cannabis dispensary he says used an image of his character Borat on a billboard without his permission, according to documents filed in U.S. District Court in Boston.

The billboard for Somerset-based Solar Therapeutics Inc. showed Baron Cohen posing as Borat with two thumbs up and the words "It's nice!" one of Borat's catchphrases.

"By use of the billboard, the defendants falsely have conveyed to the public that Mr. Baron Co-

hen has endorsed their products and is affiliated



In this April 26, 2021 file photo, Sacha Baron Cohen arrives to attend a screening of the Oscars in Sydney, Australia.

Associated Press

with their business," according to the complaint filed Monday. "To the contrary, Mr. Baron Cohen never has used cannabis in his life. He never would participate in an advertising campaign for cannabis, for any amount of money."

The billboard along a Massachusetts interstate highway was taken down in April, three days after Baron Cohen's attorneys sent a cease-and-desist order to the dispensary, according to the suit.

"Mr. Baron Cohen is highly protective of his image

and persona, and those of his characters. Mr. Baron Cohen is very careful with the manner in which he uses his persona and his characters to interact with his fans and the general public," the complaint says.

Baron Cohen and his California-based company Please You Can Touch LLC are seeking \$9 million in damages.

No attorney for Solar Therapeutics Inc. was listed in court records. Email and telephone requests for comment were left with the company Tuesday. □

Konrad wins Tour de France's stage 16, Pogacar keeps lead

SAINT-GAUDENS, France (AP) — Austrian rider Patrick Konrad won the Tour de France's hilly 16th stage on an otherwise uneventful day Tuesday as race leader Tadej Pogacar remained on course for his second overall victory.

Konrad made his decisive break with just over 36 kilometers (22.5 miles) to go, four kilometers (2.5 miles) before the summit of Col de Portet-d'Aspet, and he maintained the lead for his first Tour stage win.

The 29-year-old Konrad finished 42 seconds ahead of a group of five chasers Sonny Colbrelli, Michael Matthews, Pierre Luc Perichon, Franck Bonnamour and Alex Aranburu Deba on the second day of racing in the Pyrenees.

Konrad is only the third Austrian to win a stage at cycling's biggest race after Max Bulla, who won three in 1931, and Georg Totschnig in 2005.

"I'm speechless. This one is for my family, for my friends, for all my believers," Konrad said. "I'm happy I had



Patrick Konrad of Austria celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the sixteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 169 kilometers (105 miles) with start in Pas de la Case and finish in Saint Gaudens, France, Tuesday, July 13, 2021.

the legs to make it to the finish. The last kilometer was uphill and it was painful again but I had some time to celebrate."

Pogacar, the defending champion, finished 13 minutes, 49 seconds after Konrad and maintained his

general classification lead of more than five minutes over Rigoberto Uran and Jonas Vingegaard.

Pogacar remained in the peloton with his GC rivals as his UAE Team Emirates team enjoyed a comfortable ride in the 169-kilome-

ter (105-mile) trek from the tiny mountain-locked nation of Andorra.

"The first two hours we were just flying, and then it settled down, but then fireworks again so it was quite technical, quite hard," Pogacar said.

The Slovenian only had to deal with rivals' attacks in the final kilometers, but he had little trouble dealing with Guillaume Martin and Wout van Aert's late actions.

"I just follow the wheels. I don't know. I had no idea what we were doing. But yeah, it was good to open the legs," said Pogacar, who just needs to avoid any mishaps in the remaining five stages.

Wednesday will be a day of Pyrenees punishment with an unforgiving 178.4-kilometer (111-mile) route that ends with three major obstacles in a row. The 17th stage ends with the hardest, a steep 16-kilometer climb to the 2,215-meter altitude finish atop Col du Portet.

"The hardest day in the Tour," Pogacar said.

"I did the recon for tomorrow and the day after so I know the climbs. It would be better if I didn't see them," the 22-year-old joked. "I'm not worried, but it's going to be really hard I think." □

Associated Press

Roger Federer says he's out of Olympics after knee 'setback'

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**
AP Tennis Writer

Roger Federer will not participate in the Tokyo Olympics, writing on social media Tuesday that he "experienced a setback" with his knee during the grass-court season.

Federer had said before Wimbledon that he would make a decision about going to the Summer Games after the Grand Slam tournament ended.

The 39-year-old from Switzerland lost in the quarterfinals at the All England Club last week to Hubert Hurkacz.

Federer had two operations on his right knee in 2020 and went more than a full year between matches. He returned to Grand Slam action at the French Open and then pulled out

of that tournament after three victories, saying he wanted to be rested and ready for the grass circuit — especially Wimbledon. On Tuesday, he said in a post on Twitter that because of the setback, he has "accepted that I must withdraw from the Tokyo Olympic Games. I am greatly disappointed, as it has been an honor and highlight of my career each time I have represented Switzerland."

Federer won a gold medal alongside Stan Wawrinka in doubles at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and a silver in singles at the 2012 London Olympics, losing to Britain's Andy Murray in the final at the All England Club.

Federer sat out the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games because of problems with his

left knee.

"I have already begun rehabilitation in the hopes of returning to the tour later this summer," wrote Federer, who turns 40 on Aug. 8. The U.S. Open, the year's last Grand Slam tournament, is scheduled to begin Aug. 30 in New York.

Federer joins a growing list of tennis stars who are not going to Tokyo, where COVID-19 cases have been rising as the July 23 opening ceremony approaches.

Serena Williams, Rafael Nadal, Simona Halep, Dominic Thiem and Nick Kyrgios are among the players who will not be competing for medals.

Novak Djokovic, who tied Federer and Nadal for the men's record by winning his 20th major championship at Wimbledon on Sun-



Switzerland's Roger Federer wipes his face with a towel during the men's singles quarterfinals match against Poland's Hubert Hurkacz on day nine of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Wednesday, July 7, 2021.

Associated Press

day, said after the final that he was 50-50 on whether to go to the Games.

On the eve of Wimbledon's start, Federer was asked where things stood for him on Tokyo.

"My feeling is I would like to go to the Olympics. I would like to play as many tournaments as possible. But I think we decided

now, let's just get through Wimbledon, sit down as a team, and then decide where we go from there," he said then. "I wish I could tell you more. In previous years, it was definitely easier. At the moment, things are not as simple as in the past. With age, you have to be more selective. You can't play it all." □

Manfred: Banning defensive shifts would be restoring MLB

By **RONALD BLUM**
AP Baseball Writer

DENVER (AP) — Banning or limiting defensive shifts would be an effort to restore Major League Baseball to how it was played before offense was suffocated by analytics, according to baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred.

Speaking before Tuesday's All-Star Game to the Baseball Writers' Association of America, Manfred said seven-inning doubleheaders and starting extra innings with runners on second base likely will be dropped after this season.

He said extending the designated hitter to the National League could be possible, but not definite.

"I think it would be a non-radical change, but I'm not going to speculate on whether we're going to propose it or get it," he said. Manfred said MLB was considering having umpires explain video review decisions to fans at ballparks over the public-address system, similar to the procedure in the NFL.

MLB's collective bargaining agreement with the players' association expires



MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred kicks off the first round of the 2021 MLB baseball draft, Sunday, July 11, 2021, in Denver.

Associated Press

Dec. 1.

"Let's just say you regulated the shift by requiring two infielders each side of second base. What does that do? It makes the game look like what it looked like when I was 12 years old," he said. "It's not change. It's kind of restoration, right? That's why people are in favor of it. And they do believe, I

think front offices in general believe it would have a positive effect on the play of the game.

"So I'm hopeful without going into the specifics of rule by rule, that we will have productive conversations with the MLBPA about I want to use my words non-radical changes to the game that will restore it

to being played in a way that is closer to I think what many of us enjoy historically.

"Remember, the game evolves, right? What we play today don't look all that much like 1971. And the question is, which version would you like to get to?" MLB is trying an experiment this year at Double-A

requiring infielders to keep both feet within the outer boundary of the infield dirt at the start of every play, but not preventing three or more defenders to either side of second base. Triple-A is using 18-by-18-inch bases rather than the traditional 15-by-15-inch.

Management has the right to change major league playing rules with an agreement with the union, or MLB can implement changes unilaterally with one year of advance notice. Manfred has been reluctant to change playing rules absent an agreement.

"We're hopeful that in the context of the CBA negotiations, we will find more receptivity than we have found to date," Manfred said.

Seven-inning doubleheaders and the extra-inning runners were adopted for the pandemic-shortened 2020 season and kept for 2021.

"I see the extra-inning rule and the seven-inning doubleheader as rules that were adopted based on medical advice to deal with COVID," Manfred said. □

Roster: Three-quarters of US Olympians have college ties

By **EDDIE PELLIS**
AP National Writer

Three-quarters of the 613-person U.S. Olympic team that was released Tuesday competed in the American collegiate system the most up-to-date number to illustrate the country's dependence on NCAA and other college programs to bring home medals.

The roster released by the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee for the Tokyo Games includes 329 women and 284 men, making this the third straight Summer Games in which the U.S. is sending more women than men to the Olympics.

Gymnast Simone Biles, who is a top contender for multiple gold medals, is making her second Olympic

appearance. She is one of 31 athletes from Texas. California leads the way with 126, followed by Flori-

Training Center and also is a high-altitude training site for some in endurance sports.



Shane Wiskus competes during the Winter Cup gymnastics competition in Indianapolis, in this Friday, Feb. 26, 2021, file photo.

Associated Press

da (51) and Colorado (34), which houses the Olympic

No single statistic, however, defines the United

States' unique situation in the Olympic world better than the number of college athletes who go on to wear the red, white and blue. Because the U.S. Olympic team does not receive government funding, it looks to universities as a major training ground and pipeline for talent. Some recent cutbacks in college sports due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other financial strains were reversed, which gave the U.S. some breathing room in its long-term quest to develop new pipelines for future Games.

At these Olympics, 463 U.S. athletes (76%) competed at 169 schools spanning Divisions I, II and III, as well as at junior colleges and collegiate club programs. Twenty of the U.S. rosters

in individual sports are made up of at least 80% of athletes who played in college and 11 teams are composed solely of them; those include men's and women's indoor volleyball, rowing and softball.

Some other facts and figures:

Swimmer Katie Grimes is the youngest U.S. Olympian at 15, while equestrian Phillip Dutton is the oldest at 57. Dutton is making his seventh Olympic appearance, which included three for Australia.

The 2020 team has 193 returning Olympians and 104 Olympic medalists, including 56 Olympic champions.

This year's team is almost 10% bigger than the one that went to Rio de Janeiro in 2016. That was a 558-person roster. □